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Gulick Resigns as Dean; Remains on Hill to Teach

Advocate of Scholarship Seeks More Contact With Undergraduates

by Philip Ruppel

Desiring to return to the classroom, W. Lawrence Gulick has resigned his position as Dean of the College effective at the end of the academic year.

The announcement came on December 29, 1978, in a letter from President J. Martin Carovano to the members of the Hamilton community.

Gulick, who has been Dean of the College since his arrival here three and one-half years ago, has accepted a post as Professor of Psychology on the Hamilton Faculty, according to Chairman of the Psychology Department George Gescheider.

Upon his resignation, Gulick, who has taught one course each semester, was hesitant to move directly into the ranks of a full-time professor on the Hill. He wished only to remain if he would go through the same appointment procedure that every faculty member goes through, according to Gulick.

Immediately after Gulick told Carovano that he wished to resign his post, Gescheider began a process of determining whether other members of the Psychology Department were willing to accept Gulick. Gescheider informed the President yesterday that the department has indicated its willingness to have Gulick serve as a full-time member of the department.

A Warm Welcome

"The whole department is very positive about it," said Gescheider. "It's going to be great. I'm glad he's staying here instead of leaving," he added. Gescheider also cited Gulick's success in past courses he has taught here.

Gulick came to Hamilton from Dartmouth where he was a Professor of Psychology for nine years as well as chairman of that department. He was also a chairman of the executive committee of the Dartmouth faculty.

W. Lawrence Gulick

A 1952 graduate of Hamilton, Gulick had informed the search committee at Hamilton in 1975 that he would remain as Dean for three to five years, after which he intended to return to teaching. In his letter to the community, the President, however, said that he tried to "persuade him [Gulick] to continue as Dean."

"In my view, he is an extraordinarily able person, and the College has been fortunate to have had him as Dean," the President wrote. "I feel privileged to have had him as a colleague and cannot imagine how a President could have had a better Dean...I am sorry that Lawry has come to the conclusion he has."

No Regrets

Gulick, however, is content to leave the post. In an interview Thursday, the Dean said that he was "happy as Dean" but "willingly passes on" his duties. "I am fundamentally a teacher and a scholar," he added.

Gulick commented that "many things in which I have been involved are repeating. I thrive on change."

"I am a great believer in the importance in having administrative changes, especially at this level," he said. Gulick also said that he enjoys contact with the undergraduates, which, as Dean, was minimal. As a professor, these contacts will increase.

Nevertheless, Gulick has no regrets. Commenting on his tenure as Dean of the College, he said, "It's been a blast. I wouldn't have missed it for the world."

According to Gulick, who is also the chairman of the Academic Council, the Council has already met and has set the wheels in motion to form a search committee for a new Dean. A special faculty meeting has been called for Tuesday, January 9, to elect members to the committee. Gulick also indicated that the Student Assembly will be approached to choose two students to participate in the search.

This is a special issue of the Spectator. Our Magazine will appear January 19 and we will return to our regular format when classes resume in Spring.

The Reign of Dean Gulick

by Kathy Hecht

In September of 1975, some 450 undergraduates arrived in Clinton to begin a four-year stay on College Hill. For one freshman in particular, Clinton was not unknown; he first came to Hamilton as a member of the Class of '52. Now, some twenty-three years later, W. Lawrence Gulick was returning to the Hill to take over the reigns as Dean of the College.

It is now three and one-half years later, and Dean Gulick has chosen to graduate with the class with which he entered. During this time, Gulick brought numerous changes to the Hill in an effort to maintain and upgrade the academic excellence of the college.

During the first month of classes in 1975, the Spectator was filled with front-page articles on the opinions of the new Dean. He began his tenure with a bang, charging the students to forget the world around the Hill and just learn how to think. Tackle the world when you're a disciplined thinker, not before, he said. To the faculty, he urged scholarship as well as teaching, thinking as well as lecturing, and questioning as well as answering. In an interview that year, the Dean expressed his commitment to long-term goals and ideals which would be achieved through the small, day-to-day brick-laying. "It takes a certain kind of person who can work through the fuzz," said Gulick.

First Target

Those goals were not to remain a secret for long. Distribution requirements, a dirty phrase to many independently-minded liberal arts undergraduates, was his first target. Gulick was concerned that students were electing a limited range of subjects, and therefore made several proposals to the faculty. By October of 1976, he had changed his tune but not his theme. Meeting opposition from both students and faculty, he said that he would not advocate a return to structured course requirements that had existed at Hamilton until 1968. Rather, he wanted to encourage students to broaden their course selection.

"My personal opinion is that we can do a better job of liberal learning than I think we're currently doing," Gulick said at the time. A year later, the faculty approved a series of educational goals to be written into the catalogue, stressing Hamilton's commitment to scholarship, breadth of learning, and basic writing and speaking skills.

As a result of these ideas, all freshmen must now demonstrate proficiency in writing and speaking; those who don't are advised to enroll in the appropriate courses. In addition, the system of "flagging" has been developed whereby any faculty member can indicate on a student's record if that student has failed to meet minimum standards in one of these two areas.

Greater student participation in the governing of the college has also been one of Gulick's goals. During that same first September, Gulick appeared before the Student Senate and suggested that they might devise a plan for playing a role in the delicate tenure proceedings. As a result, the Student Tenure Committee was created, a group which, after soliciting interviews and written evaluations from students and graduates, makes its own recommendation to the Dean. This year, the faculty voted to open its meetings to spectators, a move which Gulick has been advocating ever since his arrival in 1975, and which he had successfully engineered at Dartmouth several years before.

In a March, 1977 interview with the Spectator, Gulick commented on the role of the student:

"It doesn't matter who you are, if what you have to say is well thought out, you'll make a difference. A bright group of hard-working kids can have a hell of an influence."

Chilly on Winter Term

Winter Term, another source of controversy among students and faculty, has been under fire from Gulick since he entered as Dean. First he came out with an attack on the relatively young tradition, arguing that the academic rationale was created after the time was set aside. By February of 1976, the Dean recommended to the Committee on Academic Policy that it "retrieve some very useful and creative aspects of Winter Study," thereby retaining the 4-1-4 calendar but altering the current program. The future status of Winter Term is still uncertain.

Gulick was thrust into the limelight in the Fall of 1977 with his proposal to offer tenured Kirkland faculty members four-year appointments, with review for tenure at Hamilton undertaken at their discretion. Catherine Frazer, dean of Kirkland, vehemently disagreed, as did virtually the entire Kirkland community. The two deans agreed to a compromise, which was then rejected by the Hamilton Board of Trustees. At one point, angry students packed the Chapel for an impromptu meeting with Hamilton's President, who turned out to be on a fundraising trip. Gulick, forced to stand in, fielded the sensitive questions well enough to temper the anger of the students present. For many of the Kirkland students, this was the first contact they had with the Dean.

With the consolidation of the two schools, Gulick's office became the focal point for the delineation of such murky issues as baccalaureate requirements and grade translations. With the absorption of the Kirkland faculty, Gulick's workload in administrative matters has increased forty percent.

Yesterday, Gulick told the Spectator that although he is leaving his post with much unfinished business behind, he expressed no regrets about his tenure as Dean. Describing himself as just a link in a chain, Gulick said that he fully expects "the institution to evolve and change after I leave, and many things that I have worked on" will change with it.

THE SPECTATOR

Kathy Hecht
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Philip Ruppel
MANAGING EDITOR

Photo courtesy of Hamilton College Communications and Development Office.

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EDITORIAL

This May will see the end of the fruitful and occassionally stormy tenure of W. Lawrence Gulick as Dean of the College. During the past three and one-half years he has been praised and attacked, liked and disliked by practically every member of this community. His zeal, which drove him to question every aspect of academe at Hamilton, placed him in a very vulnerable position.

While we cannot agree with everything Dean Gulick has attempted or accomplished, it is clear that his act will be a hard one to follow. Given the enormous determination and devotion of this man as well as his deep sense of loyalty to this College, a successor will not be easy to find.

Gulick himself said that an institution needs constant change. He has been only one link in an unending chain in Hamilton's history, although he has been a particularly strong one. The Search Committee must now find someone who can continue moving the College into the 1980's, while at the same time retain the strong traditions of academic excellence on which Hamilton and Kirkland Colleges were built.